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(54) **Stereoscopic imaging display system**

Stereoskopisches bildanzeigesystem

Système d'affichage d'images stéréoscopiques

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## Description

[0001] This invention relates to imaging systems and is more particularly, but not exclusively, concerned with stereoscopic display systems of the type comprising a pixelated display device, such as a liquid crystal display device for example, and a complementary viewing device for positioning immediately in front of a viewer's eyes to enable a stereoscopic image displayed by the display device to be viewed.

[0002] Figure 1 diagrammatically illustrates a known stereoscopic display system comprising a stereoscopic display device in association with a complementary viewing device in the form of spectacles comprising two orthogonal polarisers intended to be disposed so that each polariser is positioned immediately in front of a respective eye of the viewer. The stereoscopic display device comprises a matrix of pixels half of which emit light polarised in a first direction and the other half of which emit light polarised in a second direction orthogonal to the first direction. For example the pixels may be arranged in columns and rows in the matrix, and alternate pixels or alternate rows or columns of pixels may be of the two different polarisation types. Thus the two eyes of the user see different images determined by switching of the pixels of the two polarisation types, and in this manner the viewer perceives a three-dimensional scene. Ideally light pertaining to only one of the different images should be incident on each eye of the user over as broad a range of wavelengths as possible if the three-dimensional image is to be of the best quality.

[0003] Referring to Figure 1, such a known stereoscopic display device may comprise a layer of liquid crystal material 1 confined between two transparent electrodes 2 and 3 one of which is shown divided into two regions A and B denoting two pixels of the device. Furthermore the electrodes 2 and 3 and liquid crystal material 1 confined therebetween are disposed between two linear polarisers 4 and 5 having polarising axes whose relative orientation is determined by the mode of switching of the liquid crystal material in the device. For example, the polarising axes of the polarisers are normally aligned perpendicular to one another in a twisted nematic liquid crystal display (TNLCD) device. As is well known, the liquid crystal material of the device acts as a pixelated optical shutter enabling the emission of light to be controlled on a pixel-by-pixel basis, and accordingly it is not necessary to describe the switching operation of such a device in detail.

[0004] In the particular arrangement which is diagrammatically shown in Figure 1 the polariser 5, which is positioned in front of the liquid crystal material 1 and associated electrodes 2, 3, has its polarisation axis 11 disposed vertically. Furthermore an optical retarder in the form of a quarter wave plate 6 is positioned in front of the polariser 5 and comprises two differently patterned regions A' and B' having optic axes 12 and 13 orientated respectively at  $-45^\circ$  and  $+45^\circ$  to the polarisa-

tion axis of the polariser 5. Thus light transmitted by the pixel A emerges from the region A' of the quarter wave plate 6 circularly polarised in a right-handed direction, as shown by the arrow 7, and light transmitted by the pixel B emerges from the region B' of the quarter wave plate 6 circularly polarised in a left-handed direction, as indicated by the arrow 8.

[0005] In order to view a stereoscopic image, it is necessary to ensure that the viewer's left eye is only aware of light transmitted by pixels of one type such as the pixel A, whilst being permanently unaware of the state of pixels of the other type, such as the pixel B, whereas the viewer's right eye is only aware of light transmitted by pixels of the other type, such as the pixel B, whilst being permanently unaware of the state of pixels of the one type, such as the pixel A. To this end, viewing spectacles with different polarising arrangements are placed immediately in front of the viewer's eyes, only the arrangement in front of the viewer's right eye 14 being shown in Figure 1 for the purposes of illustration.

[0006] In this case the arrangement comprises an optical retarder in the form of a quarter wave plate 9 having its optic axis 15 parallel to the optic axis 13 of the region B' of the quarter wave plate 6, and a polariser 10 having its polarisation axis 16 orientated at  $90^\circ$  to the polarisation axis 11 of the polariser 5. Thus the region B' of the quarter wave plate 6 and the quarter wave plate 9 having parallel optic axes 13 and 15 behave as a half wave plate with its optic axis orientated at  $+45^\circ$  to the polarisation axis 11 and disposed between the crossed polarisers 5 and 10, thus allowing the transmission of light from the pixel B to the viewer's right eye 14. On the other hand, since the region A' of the quarter wave plate 6 and the quarter wave plate 9 have crossed optic axes and are disposed between the crossed polarisers 5 and 10, light transmitted from the pixel A is cancelled almost completely at all wavelengths (assuming the quarter wave plates 6 and 9 are made of the same material so that they have the same dispersion characteristics) so that substantially no light reaches the viewer's right eye 14 from the pixel A. Such fully achromatic behaviour due to summing of the effect of optical retarders to zero retardation is known, for example, from US Patent No. 4719507.

[0007] Although not specifically shown in Figure 1, it will be appreciated that the converse arrangement associated with the user's left eye comprises a quarter wave plate having its optic axis parallel to the optic axis 12 of the region A' of the quarter wave plate 6 and a polariser having its polarisation axis at  $90^\circ$  to the polarisation axis 11 of the polariser 5. In this case such a quarter wave plate and the region A' of the quarter wave plate 6 having parallel optic axes behave as a half wave plate with its optic axis at  $-45^\circ$  between the crossed polarisers, and thus light transmitted from the pixel A reaches the viewer's left eye, whereas the crossed optic axes of the quarter wave plate and the region B' of the quarter wave plate 6 ensures that substantially no light from the

pixel B reaches the viewer's left eye.

**[0008]** However the two sequential quarter wave plates which form a half wave retarder (unlike a zero wave retarder) only act in the required manner at a single wavelength, so that their transmission properties between crossed polarisers are chromatic, rather than achromatic. This can be seen from the graph of Figure 2 showing the transmission level as a function of wavelength for the light received by the viewer's right eye 14 from the region B, after passing through the analysing polariser 10, and from the region A' of the quarter wave plate 6. Whilst the light from the region A' is cancelled substantially completely at all wavelengths, the light from the region B, after passing through the analysing polariser 10, is substantially unattenuated at only one wavelength (about 525 nm) whereas the light at other wavelengths is attenuated to a lesser or greater extent. Of course, the light received by the viewer's left eye will have a similar transmission profile but with A substituted for B' and B' substituted for A' in Figure 2.

**[0009]** Instead of having an achromatic dark state and a chromatic bright state as in the case of the graph of Figure 2, it is possible for the device to be adapted to have a chromatic dark state and an achromatic bright state by providing a polariser 10 with a polarisation axis parallel to the polarisation axis 11 of the polariser 5. Figure 3 is a graph of the transmission profile of the light received from the regions A' and B' of the quarter wave plate 6 by the viewer's right eye showing, as expected, the wavelength dependence of the light received from the region B'. Again the transmission profile of the light received by the viewer's left eye is similar with A' substituted for B and B substituted for A' in Figure 3.

**[0010]** Figure 4 shows a graph illustrating the light levels received from the regions A' and B' of the quarter wave plate 6 by the viewer's right eye, but with polycarbonate retarders being used to form a quarter wave plate 9 in each part of the viewing spectacles. Such polycarbonate retarders are more conventional, and thus less costly, for such use. The performance of the system is not greatly compromised by the use of polycarbonate retarders.

**[0011]** S. Pancharatnam "Achromatic Combinations of Birefringent Plates" Proceedings of Indian Academy of Sciences Vol. XLI, no. 4, Sec. A, 1955, pp. 130-136 and pp. 137-144 discuss the use of stacked uniform retarder films to improve achromaticity. However these papers are not specifically concerned with stereoscopic imaging systems.

**[0012]** It is an object of the invention to provide an imaging system having an improved achromatic bandwidth.

**[0013]** According to the present invention, there is provided an imaging system comprising a matrix of light modulating elements comprising first elements for transmitting a first image component and second elements for transmitting a second image component, polarising means having a first polarisation axis for linearly

polarising light from the first and second elements, first optical retardation means incorporating at least one first retarder having first regions having a first optic axis at a first orientation to the first polarisation axis and second regions having a second optic axis at a second orientation to the first polarisation axis, whereby light from the first elements is polarised by the first regions and light from the second elements is polarised by the second regions orthogonally to the light polarised by the first regions, and detecting means having first and second detecting parts, each detecting part comprising respective second optical retardation means incorporating at least one second retarder and analysing means having a second polarisation axis intended to be disposed at a defined orientation relative to the first polarisation axis, at least one second retarder of the first detecting part having an optic axis which is intended to be disposed substantially perpendicularly to the first optic axis and transversely to the second optic axis of said at least one first retarder, and at least one second retarder of the second detecting part having an optic axis which is intended to be disposed substantially perpendicularly to the second optic axis and transversely to the first optic axis of said at least one first retarder, whereby substantially only light relating to the first image component is transmitted by the first detecting part and substantially only light relating to the second image component is transmitted by the second detecting part.

**[0014]** Such an imaging system is particularly applicable to a stereoscopic imaging system in which the first and second detecting parts are constituted by left eye and right eye viewing parts of viewing means by means of which a viewer may view a stereoscopic image. Because the optic axis of the second retarder of each viewing part is disposed substantially perpendicularly to a respective one of the first and second optic axes as well as transversely to the other of the first and second optic axes, each of the viewer's eyes will receive substantially only light from a respective one of the first and second image components, the light from the other image component being substantially cancelled. Such a system is therefore capable of providing a substantial improvement in achromaticity as compared with a conventional stereoscopic display system utilising similar materials for the retarders.

**[0015]** However it is important to appreciate that the imaging system of the invention has application in systems other than stereoscopic display systems. For example the system may be applied to a system in which each of the two achromatic channels is applied to a respective detector or viewer for detecting or viewing the first and second image components separately (rather than as two parts of a stereoscopic image). Furthermore the system may be applied to a projection system in which a stereoscopic image is projected on to a suitable receiving surface and is viewed by the viewer through the left eye and right eye viewing parts of the viewing means.

**[0016]** Preferably the first optical retardation means is adapted to linearly polarise light from the first elements in a first direction and to linearly polarise light from the second elements in a second direction transverse to the first direction. Alternatively the first optical retardation means may be adapted to circularly polarise light from the associated elements. It will be understood that, in either case, each of the retardation means may comprise more than one retarder which sum to produce the required linear or circular polarisation.

**[0017]** It will be understood that the required orthogonal relationship between the polarised light from the first elements and the polarised light from the second elements can be satisfied whether the light is linearly polarised or circularly polarised.

**[0018]** Furthermore the at least one first retarder may comprise a half wave plate incorporating first and second regions having optic axes which are orientated at equal but opposite angles to the first polarisation axis. For example, the optic axes of the first and second regions of the half wave plate may be orientated at about  $-22.5^\circ$  and about  $+22.5^\circ$  to the first polarisation axis.

**[0019]** Furthermore the at least one second retarder may comprise a half wave plate, the two half wave plates of the first and second detecting parts having optic axes which are orientated at equal but opposite angles to the first polarisation axis. For example, the optic axes of the half wave plates of the first and second detecting parts may be orientated at about  $-67.5^\circ$  and about  $+67.5^\circ$  to the first polarisation axis.

**[0020]** In a system in which the detecting means is tiltable relative to the first optical retardation means, third optical retardation means are advantageously provided for circularly polarising the light from the first and second regions of the first optical retardation means, and respective fourth optical retardation means associated with each of the detecting parts are provided for linearly polarising the circularly polarised light from the third optical retardation means for input into the second optical retardation means of the detecting part. For example, the third optical retardation means may comprise a quarter wave plate having an optic axis orientated at about  $90^\circ$  to the first polarisation axis. Also the respective fourth optical retardation means of each of the detecting parts may comprise a quarter wave plate having an optic axis which is substantially parallel to the first polarisation axis.

**[0021]** Alternatively the third optical retardation means may comprise a quarter wave plate incorporating first regions having an optic axis at a first orientation to the first polarisation axis and second regions having an optic axis at a second orientation to the first polarisation axis such that light from the first elements is circularly polarised in one direction and light from the second elements is circularly polarised in the opposite direction.

**[0022]** The invention further provides a method of obtaining a stereoscopic image by combining a matrix of light modulating elements with detecting means having

first and second detecting parts, wherein the matrix of lightmodulating elements comprises first elements which transmit a first image component and second elements which transmit a second image component, there being associated with the matrix polarising means having a first polarisation axis which linearly polarises light from the first and second elements, and first optical retardation means incorporating at least one first retarder having first regions having a first optic axis at a first orientation to the first polarisation axis and second regions having a second optic axis at a second orientation to the first polarisation axis, whereby light from the first elements is polarised by the first regions and light from the second elements is polarised by the second regions orthogonally to the light polarised by the first regions; and each detecting part of the detecting means comprises respective second optical retardation means incorporating at least one second retarder and analysing means having a second polarisation axis at a defined orientation relative to the first polarisation axis, at least one second retarder of the first detecting part having an optic axis which is substantially perpendicular to the first optic axis and transverse to the second optic axis of said at least one first retarder, and at least one second retarder of the second detecting part having an optic axis which is substantially perpendicular to the second optic axis and transverse to the first optic axis of said at least one first retarder, whereby substantially only light relating to the first image component is transmitted by the first detecting part and substantially only light relating to the second image component is transmitted by the second detecting part.

**[0023]** In order that the invention may be more fully understood, several stereoscopic display systems in accordance with the invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 diagrammatically shows a known stereoscopic display system;

Figures 2, 3 and 4 are graphs of the transmission level against wavelength of light received by one of the viewer's eyes in use of the system of Figure 1; Figure 5 diagrammatically shows a first stereoscopic display system in accordance with the invention;

Figures 6 and 7 are graphs of the transmission level against wavelength of light received by one of the viewer's eyes in use of the system of Figure 5; Figures 8 and 9 are graphs similar to the graphs of Figures 2 and 6 but with the viewer's head tilted through  $20^\circ$ ;

Figure 10 diagrammatically shows a second stereoscopic display system in accordance with the invention;

Figures 11, 12 and 13 are graphs of the transmission level against wavelength in use of the system of Figure 10;

Figures 14 and 16 diagrammatically show third and

fourth stereoscopic display systems in accordance with the invention;

Figures 15 and 17 are graphs of the transmission level against wavelength in use of the systems of Figures 14 and 16 respectively; and

Figure 18 diagrammatically shows the first display system when used to display a 2D image.

**[0024]** In each of the stereoscopic display systems in accordance with the invention to be described below, the optical retardation elements are chosen such that the elements of the display device and the elements of the viewing spectacles combine to produce a superior achromatic bandwidth as compared with the bandwidth obtainable using simple quarter wave plates as in the system of Figure 1, using the same birefringence material for the optical retardation elements in both systems. It is important to appreciate that such improved achromaticity is dependent on the same material being used for the optical retardation elements in the two systems, since such an improvement may not be obtainable if a much inferior material, that is a highly dispersive material, is used for the optical retardation elements of the systems of the invention as compared with the material used for the quarter wave plates of the system of Figure 1.

**[0025]** In the following description, the optical retardation elements are chosen to have their stated values at a wavelength of 525 nm. However it should be noted that, in practice, the birefringence of such retardation elements is a function of temperature. Thus, when selecting materials for such retardation elements, it is necessary to bear in mind the different typical operating temperatures of the display device and the viewing spectacles. In the following description it is assumed that the material of all the retardation elements is the diacrylate polymer RM257 (obtainable from Merck Limited) except where otherwise stated. Such a polymer undergoes photopolymerisation so that it can be processed by photolithography in order to produce patterned retardation elements.

**[0026]** The first stereoscopic display system in accordance with the invention shown diagrammatically in Figure 5 comprises a liquid crystal optical shutter having similar liquid crystal material 1, electrodes 2, 3 and polarisers 4, 5 as shown in Figure 1, and accordingly the same reference numerals are used in Figure 5 to denote these elements. However, in place of the quarter wave plate 6 of Figure 1, a patterned half wave plate 20 is used comprising a region A' having an optic axis 21 orientated at  $-22.5^\circ$  to the polarisation axis 1 of the polariser 5 and a region B' having an optic axis 22 orientated at an angle  $+22.5^\circ$  to the polarisation axis 11 of the polariser 5. Thus light transmitted by the pixel A emerges from the region A' of the half wave plate 20 linearly polarised at  $-45^\circ$  to the polarisation axis 11 of the polariser 5, as shown by the arrow 23, and light transmitted by the pixel B emerges from the region B' of the half wave

plate 20 linearly polarised at  $+45^\circ$  to the polarisation axis 11 of the polariser 5, as indicated by the arrow 24. Again for the purposes of illustration, only the viewing arrangement associated with the user's right eye 14 is shown in Figure 5, this arrangement comprising a half wave plate 25 having its optic axis 26 orientated at  $-67.5^\circ$  to the polarisation axis 11 of the polariser 5 and a polariser 27 having its polarisation axis 28 orientated at  $90^\circ$  to the polarisation axis 11 of the polariser 5. Of course, the corresponding viewing arrangement associated with the viewer's left eye comprises a half wave plate having its optic axis orientated at  $+67.5^\circ$  to the polarisation axis 11 of the polariser 5 and a further polariser having its polarisation axis orientated at  $90^\circ$  to the polarisation axis 11 of the polariser 5. The optic axis 26 of the half wave plate 25 associated with the viewer's left eye is therefore perpendicular to the optic axis 22 of the region B' of the half wave plate 20 and transverse to (that is not parallel to) the optic axis 21 of the region A' of the half wave plate 20. Further the optic axis of the half wave plate associated with the viewer's left eye is perpendicular to the optic axis 21 of the region A' and transverse to the optic axis 22 of the region B'.

**[0027]** Although not specifically shown in Figure 5, it should be appreciated that, in the case of a liquid crystal display panel for example, the retarder 20 may be positioned either internally or externally of the substrate of the display panel. If positioned internally of the display panel the retarder 20 may be disposed between the liquid crystal material 1 and the electrode 3 provided that the polariser 5 is still positioned internally of the retarder 20. It will also be appreciated that a similar system in accordance with the invention may be applied to a stereoscopic projection system in which case the light emerging from the half wave plate 20 is projected on to a suitable screen and the resulting stereoscopic image is viewed through the left eye and right eye viewing arrangements. In this case the liquid crystal optical shutter may be replaced by a slide incorporating the polarisers 4, 5 and the half wave plate 20 positioned between the light source and the screen.

**[0028]** Figure 6 is a graph of the transmission level of light from the regions A' and B' of the half wave plate 20 reaching the viewer's right eye. Since the light emerging from the region B' is polarised at  $-45^\circ$  and is therefore at an angle of  $112.5^\circ$  to the optic axis 26 of the half wave plate 25, such light is rotated to an angle of  $2 \times 112.5^\circ$  relative to the optic axis 26 so as to be orientated at an angle of  $-(67.5 + 112.5) = 180^\circ$  to the polarisation axis 11 of the polariser 5, with the result that such light is cancelled by the polariser 27 so that substantially no light from the region B' reaches the viewer's right eye 14. Of course, this can be predicted from the fact that the optic axis 26 of the half wave plate 25 is crossed with the optic axis 22 of the region B' of the half wave plate 20. On the other hand light from the region A' polarised at  $+45^\circ$  is at an angle of  $22.5^\circ$  to the optic axis 26 of the half wave plate 25 so that the light emerges

from the half wave plate 25 at  $-(67.5 + 22.5) = -90^\circ$  so that such light passes through the polariser 27 to the viewer's right eye 14. Similarly the half wave plate associated with the viewer's left eye has an optic axis orientated at  $+67.5^\circ$  and a polariser having its polarisation axis at  $90^\circ$  to the polarisation axis 11 of the polariser 5 so that the optic axis of this half wave plate is crossed with the optic axis 21 of the region A' of the half wave plate 20 with the result that light from the region A' is cancelled by the half wave plate and only light from the region B' is received at the viewer's left eye.

**[0029]** Figure 6 shows the transmission level against wavelength of the light from the regions A' and B' of the half wave plate 20 received by the viewer's right eye 14, and this indicates a substantial improvement in achromaticity relative to the transmission profile of Figure 2 obtained in use of the known system of Figure 1. In other words, the light received at the viewer's eye is significantly less dependent on the wavelength of the light, as indicated by the much flatter transmission profile for light from the region A' in the wavelength range 450 nm to 650 nm. It should be noted that, in this case, it is the light from the region A' which is received at the viewer's right eye, rather than the light from the region B' as in Figure 2. As before, the transmission profile of the light received at the viewer's left eye will be as shown in Figure 6 but with B' substituted for A' and A' substituted for B'.

**[0030]** As with the known system previously described with reference to Figure 1, such an arrangement provides an achromatic dark state and a chromatic bright state. Alternatively the system may be chosen to provide a chromatic dark state and an achromatic bright state by rotating the polariser 27 through  $90^\circ$  so that its polarisation axis 28 is parallel to the polarisation axis 11 of the polariser 5. The transmission profile of such an alternative arrangement is shown in Figure 7 with, in this case, light being received at the viewer's right eye primarily from the region B' of the half wave plate 20, and light from the region A' being substantially extinguished. Again comparison of the transmission profile of Figure 7 with the transmission profile of Figure 3 shows a substantial improvement in achromaticity.

**[0031]** However the system of Figure 5 suffers from one disadvantage with respect to the known system of Figure 1 in that, in the case of the known system of Figure 1, light emerging from the regions A' and B' of the quarter wave plate 6 is circularly polarised (albeit over a restricted wavelength range) and this means that the transmission profiles of Figures 2 and 3 have a certain insensitivity to combined rotation of the quarter wave plate 9 and polariser 10 of the viewing spectacles, that is to tilting of the viewer's head. However this advantage is not obtained with the system of Figure 5 because the light emerging from the regions A' and B' of the half wave plate 20 is linearly polarised, rather than circularly polarised. This is demonstrated by the graphs of Figures 8 and 9 which show the transmission profile of light re-

ceived by the viewer's right eye with the system of Figure 1 and with the system of Figure 5 respectively when the viewer's head is tilted through  $+20^\circ$  (so that, for example, the angle of the optic axis 15 of the quarter wave plate 9 is  $65^\circ$  and the angle of the polarisation axis 16 of the polariser 10 is  $110^\circ$ ). Comparison of Figure 8 with Figure 2 shows that the transmission profile of the light received by the viewer's right eye is not greatly affected by such tilting of the viewer's head, whereas comparison of Figure 9 with Figure 6 shows a significant effect caused by such tilting of the viewer's head and resulting in a significant quantity of light from the region B' reaching the viewer's right eye.

**[0032]** In a second stereoscopic display system in accordance with the invention shown in Figure 10, additional elements are provided both in the display device and the viewing spectacles, namely a quarter wave plate 30 in front of the half wave plate 20 having its optic axis 31 oriented at  $90^\circ$  relative to the polarisation axis 11 of the polariser 5, and a further quarter wave plate 32 behind the half wave plate associated with each of the viewer's eyes having its optic axis 33 parallel to the polarisation axis 11 of the polariser 5. The effect of the quarter wave plates 30 and 32 having crossed optic axes 31 and 33 is to produce circularly polarised light 34 and 35 passing between the display device and the viewing spectacles.

**[0033]** Figure 11 shows the transmission profile of light received from the region A' of the half wave plate 20 by the viewer's right eye in use of the system of Figure 10 showing that similar achromaticity is obtained to the transmission profile of Figure 6 for the system of Figure 5. Furthermore Figure 12 shows the transmission profile of light received at the viewer's right eye in use of the system of Figure 10 but with the viewer's head tilted through  $+20^\circ$ . Comparison of Figure 12 with Figure 9 showing the corresponding transmission profile for the system of Figure 5 when the viewer's head is tilted through the same angle indicates a considerable improvement in the insensitivity of the transmission profile to tilting of the viewer's head.

**[0034]** In producing the chromaticity plot of Figure 11, the optical retardation elements in the system of Figure 10 were made of birefringent diacrylate polymer RM257 which, because of its ability to undergo photopolymerisation, can be patterned by photolithography and is therefore particularly suitable as a material for the half wave plate 20 of Figure 10. However, since the quarter wave plate 32 and the half wave plate 25 of the viewing spectacles are unpatterned, it might be preferable for these elements to be made out of more conventional and less costly materials utilising stretched retarder films. In practice these elements might be composed of polycarbonate.

**[0035]** Figure 13 shows the transmission profile of light received by the viewer's right eye for the system of Figure 10 but with the quarter wave plate 32 and the half wave plate 25 being made of polycarbonate (but with

the half wave plate 20 and the quarter wave plate 30 being made of the polymer RM257 as before). It will be noted that there are slight differences between the transmission profiles of Figures 11 and 13. For example the dark state is no longer absolutely achromatic in the wavelength region of about 350 nm in Figure 13. However the system of Figure 10 still provides substantially improved achromaticity as compared with the known system of Figure 1 when the quarter wave plate 32 and the half wave plate 25 are made from polycarbonate. In this regard the transmission profile of Figure 13 should be compared with the transmission profile of Figure 4 showing the light received by the viewer's right eye for the known system of Figure 1 when the quarter wave plate 9 is made from polycarbonate.

**[0036]** Figure 14 shows a third stereoscopic display system in accordance with the invention which utilises more than one patterned optical retardation element to further improve the achromaticity of the system. In this case the display device incorporates three optical retardation elements, namely two half wave plates 40 and 41 and a quarter wave plate 42, having regions A' and B' whose optic axes are orientated at (i)  $-6.87^\circ$  and  $-6.87^\circ$  in the case of the half wave plate 40, (ii)  $-34.53^\circ$  and  $+34.53^\circ$  in the case of the half wave plate 41, and (iii)  $-100.33^\circ$  and  $+100.33^\circ$  in the case of the quarter wave plate 42. As in the system of Figure 10, circularly polarised light 43 and 44 passes between the display device and the viewing spectacles. Furthermore the viewing spectacles include three optical retardation elements for each eye, namely a quarter wave plate 45 having its optic axis at  $190.33^\circ$ , a half wave plate 46 having its optic axis at  $124.53^\circ$  and a half wave plate 47 having its optic axis at  $96.87^\circ$ , as well as a polariser 48 having its polarisation axis parallel to the polarisation axis 11 of the polariser 5. The three retardation elements 45, 46 and 47 combine to form a circular polariser. The retardation elements associated with the viewer's right eye 14 are shown in Figure 14, and it will be appreciated that the corresponding retardation elements associated with the viewer's left eye will have their optic axes orientated at corresponding negative angles.

**[0037]** It should be appreciated that the optic axis of the half wave plate 46 associated with the viewer's right eye which is orientated at  $124.53^\circ$  is perpendicular to the optic axis of the region B' of the half wave plate 41 orientated at  $+34.53^\circ$  and transverse (that is not parallel) to the optic axis of the region A' of the half wave plate 41 orientated at  $-34.53^\circ$ . Furthermore the optic axis of the half wave plate 46 associated with the viewer's left eye orientated at  $-124.53^\circ$  is perpendicular to the optic axis of the region A' of the half wave plate 41 and transverse to the optic axis of the region B' of the half wave plate 41.

**[0038]** Figure 15 shows the transmission profile of light received by the viewer's right eye for the system of Figure 14. The total effect of the retardation elements between the pixel A and the viewer's right eye is to im-

part substantially zero retardation so as to provide a white appearance between parallel polarisers, whereas the total effect of the retardation elements between the pixel B and the viewer's right eye is to act as a half wave plate so as to provide a black appearance between parallel polarisers, with a much broader bandwidth being provided as compared with the known system of Figure 1. As with previously described systems, the dark and bright states can be interchanged by rotating the polariser 48 through  $90^\circ$  so that its polarisation axis is crossed with the polarisation axis 11 of the polariser 5.

**[0039]** Figure 16 shows a fourth stereoscopic display system in accordance with the invention having the same number of retardation elements as the system of Figure 14. However, in the system of Figure 16, the retardation elements comprise a  $0.322\lambda$  retarder 50 having an optic axis at  $-102.5^\circ$  in the region A' and an optic axis at  $+102.5^\circ$  in the region B', a half wave plate 51 having an optic axis at  $-172.5^\circ$  in the region A' and an optic axis at  $+172.5^\circ$  in the region B', and a  $0.322\lambda$  retarder 52 having an optic axis at  $-102.5^\circ$  in the region A' and an optic axis at  $+102.5^\circ$  in the region B'. Furthermore the retardation elements for each eye of the viewing spectacles comprise a  $0.322\lambda$  retarder 53 having an optic axis at  $\pm 192.5^\circ$ , a half wave plate 54 having an optic axis at  $\pm 262.5^\circ$ , and a  $0.322\lambda$  retarder 55 having an optic axis at  $\pm 192.5^\circ$ . The three retardation elements 50, 51 and 52 combine to form a first quarter wave retarder having a unique optic axis for each region A' or B', and the three retardation elements 53, 54 and 55 for each eye combine to form a second quarter wave retarder having an optic axis perpendicular to one of the optic axes of the first quarter wave retarder and transverse to the other optic axis of the first quarter wave retarder. Figure 17 shows the transmission profile of the light received by the viewer's right eye for the system of Figure 16, and it will be appreciated that similar performance is achieved with such a system as with the system of Figure 14.

**[0040]** In a development of the invention the liquid crystal display panel is controllable between two modes, that is a stereoscopic image display mode and a conventional 2D (non-stereoscopic) image display mode, and a user-operable switch is provided to enable the user to switch the system between these two modes. In the conventional 2D image display mode, the liquid crystal display panel is driven by conventional 2D data signals such as are used to display 2D images in known 2D display systems. Since the human eye is insensitive to the polarisation state of the light, the viewer can observe the 2D image simply by removing the viewing device (comprising the components 25 and 27 in Figure 5) from before the eyes. This is illustrated in Figure 18 which shows the components 25 and 27 removed in the embodiment of Figure 5. In this case the viewer becomes substantially unaware of the patterned retarder 20 because the retarder 20 substantially only affects the polarisation state of the light. Thus, provided that the ap-

propriate 2D image data is supplied to the pixels of the display panel in place of the 3D image data otherwise supplied, the panel can operate as a conventional 2D display panel which is viewed by the user without the aid of the viewing device.

## Claims

1. An imaging system comprising a matrix (1, 2, 3) of light modulating elements comprising first elements (A) for transmitting a first image component and second elements (B) for transmitting a second image component, polarising means (5) having a first polarisation axis (11) for linearly polarising light from the first and second elements, first optical retardation means incorporating at least one first retarder (20; 41; 51) having first regions (A') having a first optic axis (21) at a first orientation to the first polarisation axis (11) and second regions (B') having a second optic axis (22) at a second orientation to the first polarisation axis (11), whereby light from the first elements (A) is polarised by the first regions (A') and light from the second elements (B) is polarised by the second regions (B') orthogonally to the light polarised by the first regions, and detecting means having first and second detecting parts, each detecting part comprising respective second optical retardation means incorporating at least one second retarder (25; 46; 54) and analysing means (27; 48) having a second polarisation axis (28) intended to be disposed at a defined orientation relative to the first polarisation axis (11), at least one second retarder (25; 46; 54) of the first detecting part having an optic axis (26) which is intended to be disposed substantially perpendicularly to the first optic axis (21) and transversely (i.e. not parallel) to the second optic axis (22) of said at least one first retarder (20; 41; 51), and at least one second retarder (25; 46; 54) of the second detecting part having an optic axis (26) which is intended to be disposed substantially perpendicularly to the second optic axis (22) and transversely (i.e. not parallel) to the first optic axis (21) of said at least one first retarder (20; 41; 51), whereby substantially only light relating to the first image component is transmitted by the first detecting part and substantially only light relating to the second image component is transmitted by the second detecting part.
2. A system according to claim 1, wherein the first optical retardation means (20; 41; 51) is adapted to linearly polarise light from the first elements (A) in a first direction and to linearly polarise light from the second element (B) in a second direction transverse to the first direction.
3. A system according to claim 1 or 2, wherein said at

least one first retarder (20; 41; 51) comprises a half wave plate incorporating first and second regions (A', B') having optic axes (21, 22) which are orientated at equal but opposite angles to the first polarisation axis (11).

4. A system according to claim 3, wherein the optic axes (21, 22) of the first and second regions (A', B') of the half wave plate are orientated at about  $-22.5^\circ$  and about  $+22.5^\circ$  to the first polarisation axis (11).
5. A system according to claim 1, 2, 3 or 4, wherein said at least one second retarder (25; 46; 54) comprises a half wave plate, the two half wave plates of the first and second detecting parts having optic axes (26) which are orientated at equal but opposite angles to the first polarisation axis (11).
6. A system according to claim 5, wherein the optic axes (26) of the half wave plates of the first and second detecting parts are orientated at about  $-67.5^\circ$  and about  $+67.5^\circ$  to the first polarisation axis (11).
7. A system according to any preceding claim, in which the detecting means is tiltable relative to the first optical retardation means (20; 41; 51), further comprising third optical retardation means (30; 42; 52) for circularly polarising the light from the first and second regions of the first optical retardation means (20; 41; 51) and respective fourth optical retardation means (32; 45; 53) associated with each of the detecting parts for linearly polarising the circularly polarised light from the third optical retardation means (30; 42; 52) for inputting to the second optical retardation means (25; 46; 54) of the detecting part.
8. A system according to claim 7, wherein the third optical retardation means (30; 42; 52) comprises a quarter wave plate having an optic axis (31) orientated at about  $90^\circ$  to the first polarisation axis (11).
9. A system according to claim 7 or 8, wherein the respective fourth optical retardation means (32; 45; 53) of each of the detecting parts comprises a quarter wave plate having an optic axis (33) which is substantially parallel to the first polarisation axis (11).
10. A system according to claim 7, wherein the third optical retardation means comprises a quarter wave plate (42) incorporating first regions (A') having an optic axis at a first orientation to the first polarisation axis (11) and second regions (B') having an optic axis at a second orientation to the first polarisation axis (11) such that light from the first elements (A) is circularly polarised in one direction and light from the second elements (B) is circularly polarised in the opposite direction.



11. A system according to any preceding claim, wherein the first optical retardation means includes two half wave plates (40, 41) disposed in series and each incorporating first and second regions (A', B') having optic axes which are orientated at equal but opposite angles to the first polarisation axis (11). 5
12. A system according to any preceding claim, wherein the second optical retardation means includes two half wave plates (46, 47) disposed in series and each incorporating first and second regions having optic axes which are orientated at equal but opposite angles to the first polarisation axis (11). 10
13. A system according to any preceding claim, being a stereoscopic imaging system, wherein the first and second detecting parts of the detecting means are constituted by left eye and right eye viewing parts by means of which a viewer may view a stereoscopic image by observing the first and second image components with the left and right eyes simultaneously. 15 20
14. A system according to claim 13, wherein the matrix (1, 2, 3) of modulating elements, the polarising means (5) and the first optical retardation means (20; 41; 51) constitute a display device, and the detecting means constitute spectacles to be worn by the viewer with the right eye and left eye viewing parts in front of the viewer's right and left eyes. 25 30
15. A system according to claim 13 or 14, wherein switchable control means are provided for controlling the light modulating elements to transmit said first and second image components in a stereoscopic imaging mode and a 2D image which is viewable without the detecting means in a non-stereoscopic image mode. 35
16. A method of obtaining a stereoscopic image by combining a matrix (1, 2, 3) of light modulating elements with detecting means having first and second detecting parts, wherein the matrix (1, 2, 3) of light modulating elements comprises first elements (A) which transmit a first image component and second elements (B) which transmit a second image component, there being associated with the matrix polarising means (5) having a first polarisation axis (11) which linearly polarises light from the first and second elements, and first optical retardation means incorporating at least one first retarder (20; 41; 51) having first regions (A') having a first optic axis (21) at a first orientation to the first polarisation axis (11) and second regions (B') having a second optic axis (22) at a second orientation to the first polarisation axis (11), whereby light from the first elements (A) is polarised by the first regions (A') and light from the second elements (B) is polarised by 40 45 50 55

the second regions (B') orthogonally to the light polarised by the first regions; and each detecting part of the detecting means comprises respective second optical retardation means incorporating at least one second retarder (25; 46; 54) and analysing means (27; 48) having a second polarisation axis (28) at a defined orientation relative to the first polarisation axis (11), at least one second retarder (25; 46; 54) of the first detecting part having an optic axis (26) which is substantially perpendicular to the first optic axis (21) and transverse (i.e. not parallel) to the second optic axis (22) of said at least one first retarder (20; 41; 51), and at least one second retarder (25; 46; 54) of the second detecting part having an optic axis (26) which is substantially perpendicular to the second optic axis (22) and transverse (i.e. not parallel) to the first optic axis (21) of said at least one first retarder (20; 41; 51), whereby substantially only light relating to the first image component is transmitted by the first detecting part and substantially only light relating to the second image component is transmitted by the second detecting part.

#### Patentansprüche

1. Bildanzeigesystem umfassend eine Matrix (1, 2, 3) von Licht modulierenden Elementen umfassend erste Elemente (A) zum Übertragen einer ersten Bildkomponente und zweite Elemente (B) zum Übertragen einer zweiten Bildkomponente, eine Polarisierungseinrichtung (5) mit einer ersten Polarisationsachse (11) zum linearen Polarisieren von Licht von den ersten und zweiten Elementen, eine erste optische Verzögerungseinrichtung, welche zumindest einen ersten Verzögerer (20; 41; 51) mit ersten Regionen (A') mit einer ersten optischen Achse (21) mit einer ersten Orientierung zu der ersten Polarisationsachse (11) und zweiten Regionen (B') mit einer zweiten optischen Achse (22) mit einer zweiten Orientierung zu der ersten Polarisationsachse (11) beinhaltet, wobei Licht von den ersten Elementen (A) polarisiert wird durch die ersten Regionen (A') und Licht von den zweiten Elementen (B) polarisiert wird durch die zweiten Regionen (B') orthogonal zu dem durch die ersten Regionen polarisierten Licht, und eine Detektionseinrichtung mit ersten und zweiten Detektionsteilen, wobei jeder Detektionsteil eine entsprechende zweite optische Verzögerungseinrichtung umfasst, welche zumindest einen zweiten Verzögerer (25; 46; 54) und eine Analyseinrichtung (27; 48) mit einer zweiten Polarisationsachse (28), welche beabsichtigt ist, in einer definierten Orientierung relativ zu der ersten Polarisationsachse (11) angeordnet zu sein, beinhaltet, wobei zumindest ein zweiter Verzögerer (25; 46; 54) des ersten Detektionsteils eine optische Achse (26) auf-

- weist, welche beabsichtigt ist, im Wesentlichen senkrecht auf die erste optische Achse (21) und quer (d.h. nicht parallel) zu der zweiten optischen Achse (22) des zumindest einen ersten Verzögerers (20; 41; 51) angeordnet zu sein, und zumindest ein zweiter Verzögerer (25; 46; 54) des zweiten Detektionsteils eine optische Achse (26) aufweist, welche beabsichtigt ist, im Wesentlichen senkrecht zu der zweiten optischen Achse (22) und quer (d.h. nicht parallel) zu der optischen Achse (21) von dem zumindest einen ersten Verzögerer (20; 41; 51) angeordnet zu sein, wobei im Wesentlichen nur Licht bezüglich der ersten Bildkomponente durch den ersten Detektionsteil übertragen wird und im Wesentlichen nur Licht bezüglich der zweiten Bildkomponente durch den zweiten Detektionsteil übertragen wird.
2. System gemäß Anspruch 1, wobei die erste optische Verzögerungseinrichtung (20; 41; 51) ausgelegt ist, um Licht von den ersten Elementen (A) in einer ersten Richtung linear zu polarisieren und Licht von dem zweiten Element (B) in einer zweiten Richtung quer zu der ersten Richtung linear zu polarisieren.
  3. System gemäß Anspruch 1 oder 2, wobei der zumindest eine erste Verzögerer (20; 41; 51) eine Halbwellenplatte umfasst, welche erste und zweite Regionen (A', B') beinhaltet, welche optische Achsen (21, 22) aufweisen, welche mit gleichen aber entgegengesetzten Winkeln zu der ersten Polarisationsachse (11) orientiert sind.
  4. System gemäß Anspruch 3, wobei die optischen Achsen (21, 22) der ersten und zweiten Regionen (A', B') der Halbwellenplatte mit etwa  $-22,5^\circ$  und etwa  $+22,5^\circ$  zu der ersten Polarisationsachse (11) orientiert sind.
  5. System gemäß Anspruch 1, 2, 3 oder 4, wobei der zumindest eine zweite Verzögerer (25; 46; 54) eine Halbwellenplatte umfasst, wobei die zwei Halbwellenplatten der ersten und zweiten Detektionsteile optische Achsen (26) aufweisen, welche mit gleichen aber entgegengesetzten Winkeln zu der ersten Polarisationsachse (11) orientiert sind.
  6. System gemäß Anspruch 5, wobei die optischen Achsen (26) der Halbwellenplatten der ersten und zweiten Detektionsteile mit etwa  $-67,5^\circ$  und etwa  $+67,5^\circ$  zu der ersten Polarisationsachse (11) orientiert sind.
  7. System gemäß einem der vorangehenden Ansprüche, in welchem die Detektionseinrichtung relativ zu der ersten optischen Verzögerungseinrichtung (20; 41; 51) neigbar ist, welches weiter umfasst eine dritte optische Verzögerungseinrichtung (30; 42; 52) zum zirkular Polarisieren des Lichts von den ersten und zweiten Regionen der ersten optischen Verzögerungseinrichtung (20; 41; 51) und eine entsprechende vierte optische Verzögerungseinrichtung (32; 45; 53), welche mit jedem der Detektionsteile assoziiert ist zum linearen Polarisieren des zirkular polarisierten Lichts von der dritten optischen Verzögerungseinrichtung (30; 42; 52) zum Eingeben zu der zweiten optischen Verzögerungseinrichtung (25; 46; 54) des Detektionsteils.
  8. System gemäß Anspruch 7, wobei die dritte optische Verzögerungseinrichtung (30; 42; 52) eine Viertelwellenplatte umfasst, welche eine optische Achse (31) aufweist, welche mit etwa  $90^\circ$  zu der ersten Polarisationsachse (11) orientiert ist.
  9. System gemäß Anspruch 7 oder 8, wobei die entsprechende vierte optische Verzögerungseinrichtung (32; 45; 53) von jedem der Detektionsteile eine Viertelwellenplatte umfasst, welche eine optische Achse (33) aufweist, welche im Wesentlichen parallel zu der ersten Polarisationsachse (11) ist.
  10. System gemäß Anspruch 7, wobei die dritte optische Verzögerungseinrichtung eine Viertelwellenplatte (42) umfasst, welche erste Regionen (A') mit einer optischen Achse mit einer ersten Orientierung zu der ersten Polarisationsachse (11) und zweite Regionen (B') mit einer optischen Achse mit einer zweiten Orientierung zu der ersten Polarisationsachse (11) beinhaltet, derart, dass Licht von den ersten Elementen (A) zirkular polarisiert wird in einer Richtung und Licht von den zweiten Elementen (B) zirkular polarisiert wird in der entgegengesetzten Richtung.
  11. System gemäß einem der vorangehenden Ansprüche, wobei die erste optische Verzögerungseinrichtung zwei Halbwellenplatten (40, 41) beinhaltet, welche in Serie angeordnet sind und jeweils erste und zweite Regionen (A', B') beinhalten, welche optische Achsen aufweisen, welche in gleichen aber entgegengesetzten Winkeln zu der ersten Polarisationsachse (11) orientiert sind.
  12. System gemäß einem der vorangehenden Ansprüche, wobei die zweite optische Verzögerungseinrichtung zwei Halbwellenplatten (46, 47) beinhaltet, welche in Serie angeordnet sind und jeweils erste und zweite Regionen beinhalten, welche optische Achsen aufweisen, welche in gleichen aber entgegengesetzten Winkeln zu der ersten Polarisationsachse (11) orientiert sind.
  13. System gemäß einem der vorangehenden Ansprüche, welches ein stereoskopisches Bildanzeigesystem

stem ist, wobei die ersten und zweiten Detektions-  
teile der Detektionseinrichtung ausgebildet sind  
aus Sichtteilen für das linke Auge und das rechte  
Auge, mittels welcher ein Betrachter ein stereosko-  
pisches Bild betrachten kann durch simultanes Be-  
obachten der ersten und zweiten Bildkomponenten  
mit dem linken und rechten Auge.

14. System gemäß Anspruch 13, wobei die Matrix (1, 2, 3) von Modulierelementen, die Polarisiereinrichtung (5) und die erste optische Verzögerungseinrichtung (20; 41; 51) eine Anzeigevorrichtung ausbilden, und die Detektionseinrichtung eine Brille ausbildet, welche durch den Betrachter getragen wird, wobei die Sichtteile für das rechte Auge und das linke Auge vor dem rechten und linken Auge des Betrachters liegen.
15. System gemäß Anspruch 13 oder 14, wobei eine schaltbare Regel- bzw. Steuereinrichtung vorgesehen ist zum Regeln bzw. Steuern der Licht modulierenden Elemente, um die ersten und zweiten Bildkomponenten in einem stereoskopischen Bildmodus und ein 2D-Bild, welches ohne die Detektionseinrichtung in einem nicht stereoskopischen Bildmodus betrachtbar ist, zu übertragen.
16. Verfahren zum Erhalten eines stereoskopischen Bilds durch Kombinieren einer Matrix (1, 2, 3) von Licht modulierenden Elementen mit einer Detektionseinrichtung mit ersten und zweiten Detektionsteilen, wobei die Matrix (1, 2, 3) von Licht modulierenden Elementen umfasst erste Elemente (A), welche eine erste Bildkomponente übertragen, und zweite Bildelemente (B), welche eine zweite Bildkomponente übertragen, wobei mit der Matrix assoziiert ist eine Polarisiereinrichtung (5), welche eine erste Polarisationsachse (11) aufweist, welche Licht von den ersten und zweiten Elementen linear polarisiert, und eine erste optische Verzögerungseinrichtung, welche zumindest einen ersten Verzögerer (20; 41; 51) beinhaltet mit ersten Regionen (A'), welche eine erste optische Achse (21) mit einer ersten Orientierung zu der ersten Polarisationsachse (11) aufweisen, und zweiten Regionen (B'), welche eine zweite optische Achse (22) mit einer zweiten Orientierung zu der ersten Polarisationsachse (11) aufweisen, wobei Licht von den ersten Elementen (A) polarisiert wird durch die ersten Regionen (A') und Licht von den zweiten Elementen (B) polarisiert wird durch die zweiten Regionen (B') orthogonal zu dem durch die ersten Regionen polarisierten Licht; und wobei jeder Detektionsteil der Detektionseinrichtung eine entsprechende zweite optische Verzögerungseinrichtung umfasst, welche zumindest einen zweiten Verzögerer (25; 46; 54) und eine Analyseinrichtung (27; 48) beinhaltet mit einer zweiten Polarisationsachse (28) mit einer defi-

nierten Orientierung relativ zu der ersten Polarisationsachse (11), wobei zumindest ein zweiter Verzögerer (25; 46; 54) des ersten Detektionsteils eine optische Achse (26) aufweist, welche im Wesentlichen senkrecht zu der ersten optischen Achse (21) und quer (d.h. nicht parallel) zu der zweiten optischen Achse (22) des zumindest einen ersten Verzögerers (20; 41; 51) ist, und zumindest ein zweiter Verzögerer (25; 46; 54) des zweiten Detektionsteils eine optische Achse (26) aufweist, welche im Wesentlichen senkrecht zu der zweiten optischen Achse (22) und quer (d.h. nicht parallel) zu der ersten optischen Achse (21) des zumindest einen ersten Verzögerers (20; 41; 51) ist, wobei im Wesentlichen nur Licht bezüglich der ersten Bildkomponente durch den ersten Detektionsteil übertragen wird und im Wesentlichen nur Licht bezüglich der zweiten Bildkomponente durch den zweiten Detektionsteil übertragen wird.

## Revendications

1. Système d'imagerie comprenant une matrice (1, 2, 3) d'éléments modulateurs de lumière comprenant de premiers éléments (A) afin de transmettre un premier composant d'image et des seconds éléments (B) pour transmettre un second composant d'image, des systèmes de polarisation (5) ayant un premier axe de polarisation (11) pour polariser la lumière de manière linéaire à partir du premier et du second éléments, un premier système de ralentissement optique intégrant au moins un premier retardateur (20 ; 41 ; 51) ayant de premières zones (A') avec un premier axe optique (21), selon une première orientation par rapport au premier axe de polarisation (11) et de secondes zones (B') ayant un second axe optique (22) selon une seconde orientation par rapport au premier axe de polarisation (11), moyennant quoi la lumière provenant des premiers éléments (A) est polarisée par les premières zones (A') et la lumière provenant des seconds éléments (B) est polarisée par les secondes zones (B') perpendiculairement à la lumière polarisée par les premières régions, et des moyens de détection ayant de premières et secondes pièces de détection, chaque pièce de détection comprenant un second moyen de ralentissement optique respectif, intégrant au moins un second retardateur (25 ; 46 ; 54) et un système d'analyse (27 ; 48) ayant un second axe de polarisation (28) destiné à être disposé selon une orientation définie relativement au premier axe de polarisation (11), au moins un second retardateur (25, 46, 54) de la première pièce de détection, ayant un axe optique (26) qui est destiné à être disposé de manière sensiblement perpendiculaire au premier axe optique (21) et de manière transversale (à savoir non parallèle) au second axe

- optique (22) dudit premier retardateur (20 ; 41 ; 51) et au moins un second retardateur (25 ; 46 ; 54) de la seconde pièce de détection ayant un axe optique (26) qui est destiné à être disposé sensiblement perpendiculairement au second axe optique (22) et de manière transversale (à savoir pas parallèle) au premier axe optique (21) dudit premier retardateur (20 ; 41 ; 51), moyennant quoi sensiblement seule une lumière relative au premier composant d'image est transmise par la première pièce de détection et sensiblement seule une lumière relative au second composant d'image est transmise par la seconde pièce de détection.
2. Système selon la revendication 1, dans lequel le premier système de ralentissement optique (20 ; 41 ; 51) est adapté pour polariser la lumière de manière linéaire, à partir des premiers éléments (A) dans une première direction et pour polariser la lumière de manière linéaire à partir du second élément (B) dans une seconde direction, transversale par rapport à la première direction.
  3. Système selon la revendication 1 ou 2, dans lequel ledit premier retardateur (20 ; 41 ; 51) comprend une lame demi-onde intégrant les première et seconde zones (A', B') ayant des axes optiques (21, 22) qui sont orientés selon des angles égaux mais opposés par rapport au premier axe de polarisation (11).
  4. Système selon la revendication 3, dans lequel les axes optiques (21, 22) de la première et de la seconde zones (A', B') de la lame demi-onde sont orientés à environ  $-22,5^\circ$  et environ  $+22,5^\circ$  par rapport au premier axe de polarisation (11).
  5. Système selon la revendication 1, 2, 3 ou 4, dans lequel ledit second retardateur (25, 46, 54) comprend une lame demi-onde, les deux lames demi-onde de la première et de la seconde pièces de détection ayant des axes optiques (26) qui sont orientés selon des angles égaux mais opposés au premier axe de polarisation (11).
  6. Système selon la revendication 5, dans lequel les axes optiques (26) des lames demi-onde de la première et de la seconde pièces de détection sont orientés à environ  $-67,5^\circ$  et environ  $+67,5^\circ$  par rapport au premier axe de polarisation (11).
  7. Système selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel le système de détection est basculant relativement au premier système de ralentissement optique (20 ; 41 ; 51), comprenant en outre un troisième système de ralentissement optique (30 ; 42 ; 52) pour polariser de manière circulaire la lumière provenant de la première et de la seconde zones du premier système de ralentissement optique (20 ; 41 ; 51) et un quatrième système de ralentissement optique respectif (32 ; 45 ; 53) associé à chacune des pièces de détection, afin de polariser, de manière linéaire, la lumière polarisée de manière circulaire à partir du troisième moyen de ralentissement optique (30 ; 42 ; 52) pour envoyer au second moyen de ralentissement optique (25 ; 46 ; 54) de la pièce de détection.
  8. Système selon la revendication 7, dans lequel le troisième système de ralentissement optique (30 ; 42 ; 52) comprend une lame quart d'onde ayant un axe optique (31) orienté à environ  $90^\circ$  par rapport au premier axe de polarisation (11).
  9. Système selon la revendication 7 ou 8, dans lequel le quatrième système de ralentissement optique respectif (32 ; 45 ; 53) de chacune des pièces de détection comprend une plaque quart d'onde ayant un axe optique (33) qui est sensiblement parallèle au premier axe de polarisation (11).
  10. Système selon la revendication 7, dans lequel le troisième moyen de ralentissement optique comprend une plaque quart d'onde (42) intégrant les premières zones (A') ayant un axe optique selon une première orientation par rapport à l'axe de polarisation (11) et de secondes zones (B') ayant un axe optique selon une seconde orientation par rapport au premier axe de polarisation (11), de sorte que la lumière provenant des premiers éléments (A) soit polarisée de manière circulaire dans une direction et la lumière provenant du second élément (B) soit polarisée de manière circulaire dans la direction opposée.
  11. Système selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel le premier moyen de ralentissement optique comprend deux lames demi-onde (40, 41) disposées en série et chacune comprenant une première et une seconde zones (A', B') ayant des axes optiques qui sont orientés selon des angles égaux mais opposés par rapport au premier axe de polarisation (11).
  12. Système selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel le second système de ralentissement optique comprend deux lames demi-onde (46, 47) disposées en série et comprenant chacune une première et une seconde zones, ayant des axes optiques qui sont orientés selon des angles égaux mais opposés par rapport au premier axe de polarisation (11).
  13. Système selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, qui s'avère être un système d'imagerie stéréoscopique, dans lequel la première

et la seconde pièces de détection du système de détection sont constituées de pièces de visualisation pour oeil gauche et oeil droit au moyen desquelles un observateur peut visualiser une image stéréoscopique en observant le premier et le second composants d'images avec les yeux gauche et droit simultanément.

14. Système selon la revendication 13, dans lequel la matrice (1, 2, 3) des éléments de modulation, le système de polarisation (5) et le premier moyen de ralentissement optique (20 ; 41 ; 51) constituent un dispositif à écran, et le système de détection représente des lunettes qui devront être portées par l'observateur, en positionnant les pièces de visualisation d'oeil droit et d'oeil gauche face aux yeux droit et gauche de l'observateur. 10
15. Système selon la revendication 13 ou 14, dans lequel des moyens de commande commutables sont fournis pour commander les éléments de modulation de lumière, afin de transmettre lesdits premier et second composants d'image dans un mode d'imagerie stéréoscopique et une image en 2D qui est visualisable sans le système de détection dans un mode d'imagerie non stéréoscopique. 20
16. Procédé consistant à obtenir une image stéréoscopique en combinant une matrice (1, 2, 3) d'éléments de modulation de lumière, avec un système de détection ayant une première et une seconde pièces de détection, dans lequel la matrice (1, 2, 3) des éléments de modulation de lumière comprend les premiers éléments (A) qui transmettent un premier composant d'image et des seconds éléments (B) qui transmettent un second composant d'image, qui sont associés au système de polarisation de la matrice (5) ayant un premier axe de polarisation (11) qui polarise la lumière provenant des premier et second éléments de manière linéaire, et un premier système de ralentissement optique intégrant au moins un premier retardateur (20 ; 41 ; 51) ayant de premières zones (A') ayant un premier axe optique (21) selon une première orientation par rapport à l'axe de polarisation (11) et de secondes zones (B') ayant un second axe optique (22) selon une seconde orientation, par rapport au premier axe de polarisation (11), moyennant quoi la lumière provenant des premiers éléments (A) est polarisée par les premières zones (A') et la lumière provenant des seconds éléments (B) est polarisée par les secondes zones (B') perpendiculairement à la lumière polarisée par les premières zones ; et chaque pièce de détection du système de détection comprend un second système de ralentissement optique respectif intégrant au moins un second retardateur (25 ; 46 ; 54) et un système d'analyse (27 ; 48) ayant un second axe de polarisation (28) selon une orientation 30

définie relative au premier axe de polarisation (11), au moins un second retardateur (25 ; 46 ; 54) de la première pièce de détection ayant un axe optique (26) qui est sensiblement perpendiculaire au premier axe optique (21) et transversal (à savoir pas parallèle) au second axe optique (22) dudit premier retardateur (20, 41 ; 51) et au moins un second retardateur (25 ; 46 ; 54) de la seconde pièce de détection ayant un axe optique (26) qui est sensiblement perpendiculaire au second axe optique (22) et transversal (à savoir pas parallèle) au premier axe optique (21) dudit premier retardateur (20 ; 41 ; 51), moyennant quoi sensiblement seule la lumière relative au premier composant d'image est transmise par la première pièce de détection et sensiblement seule la lumière relative au second composant d'image est transmise par la seconde pièce de détection. 35

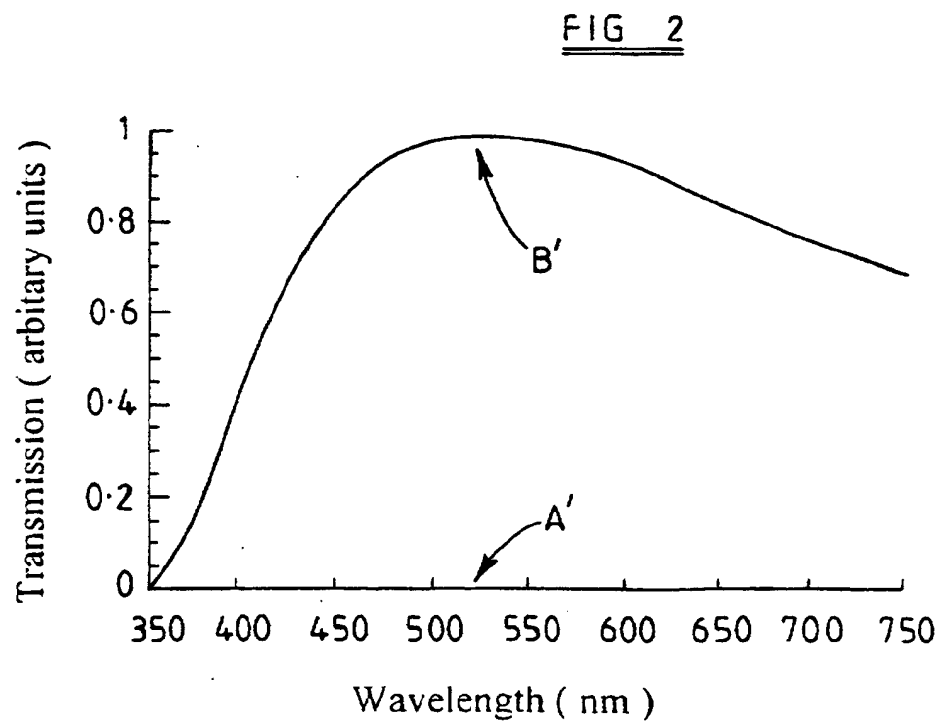
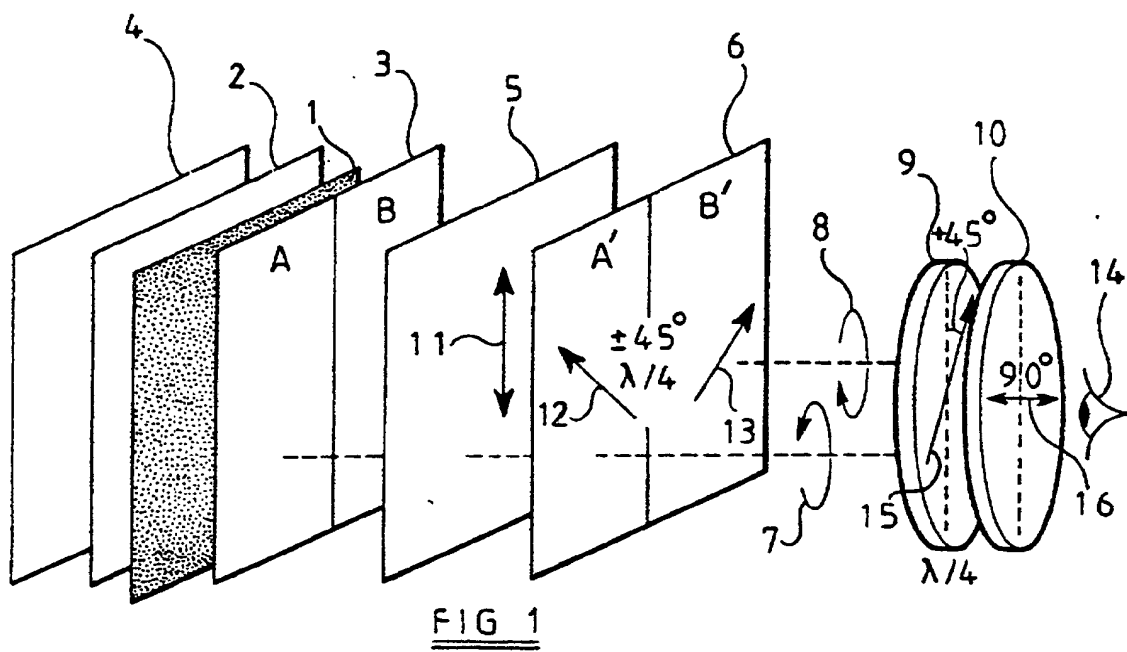
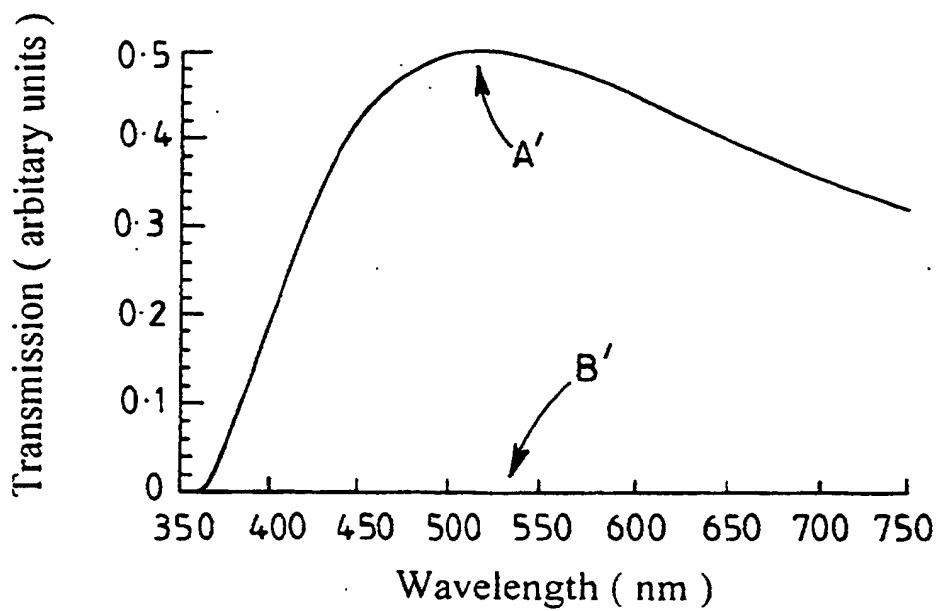
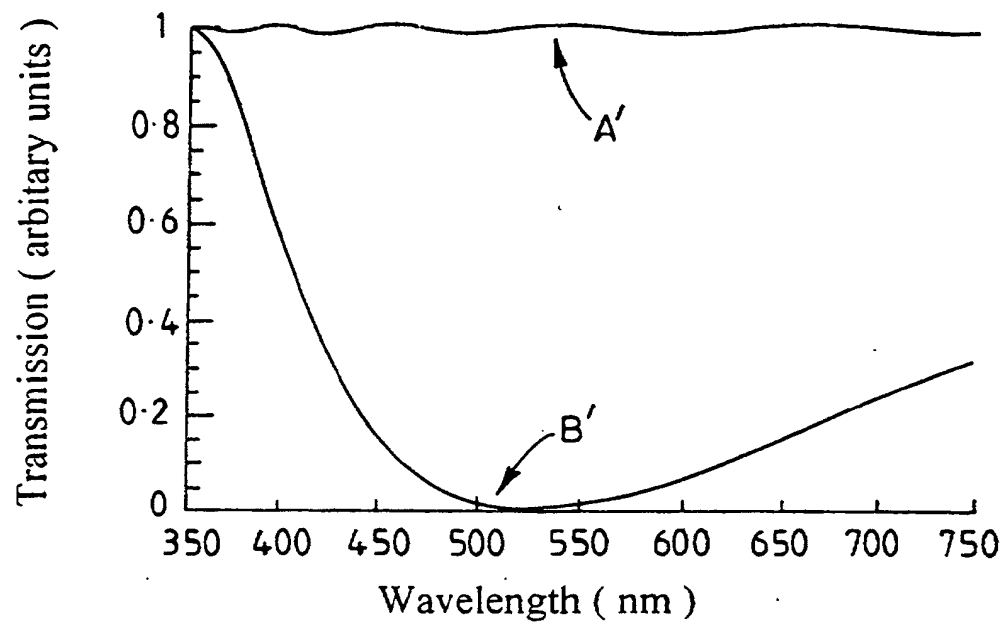


FIG 3FIG 4

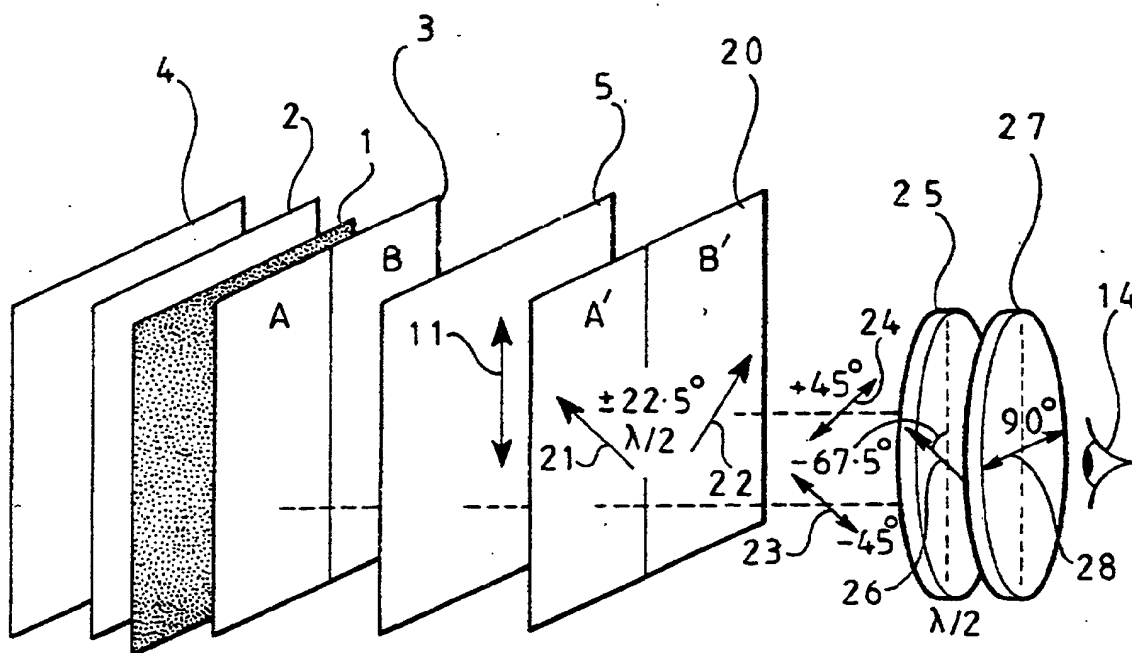
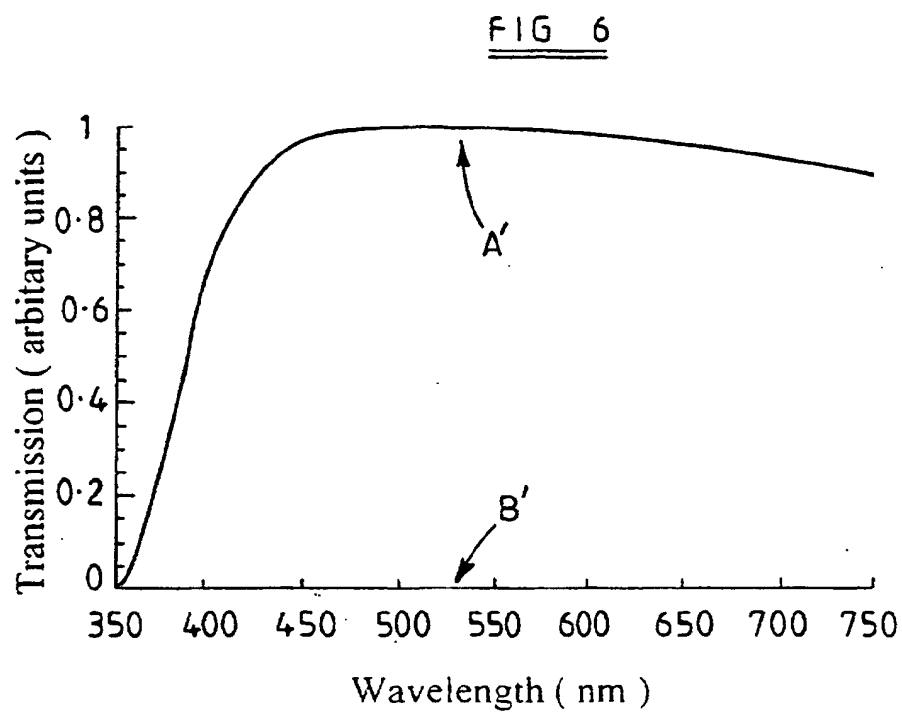
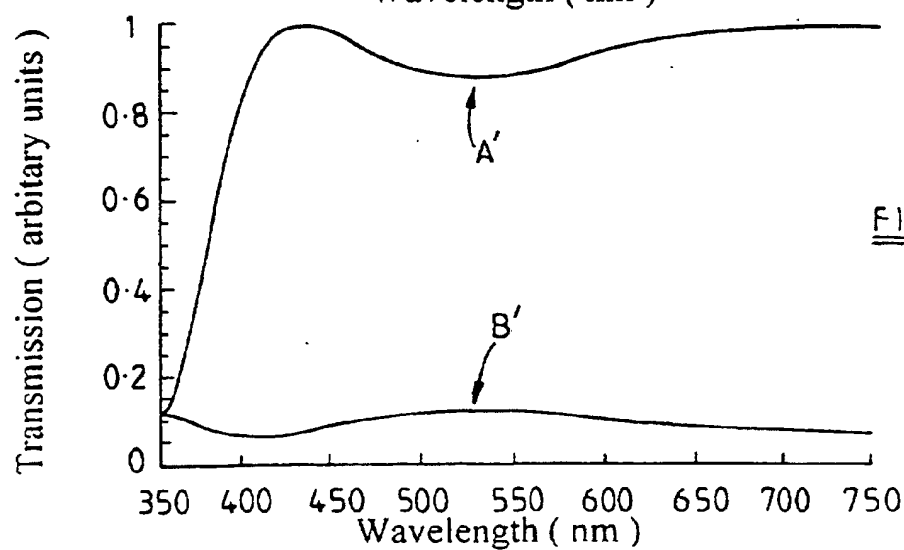
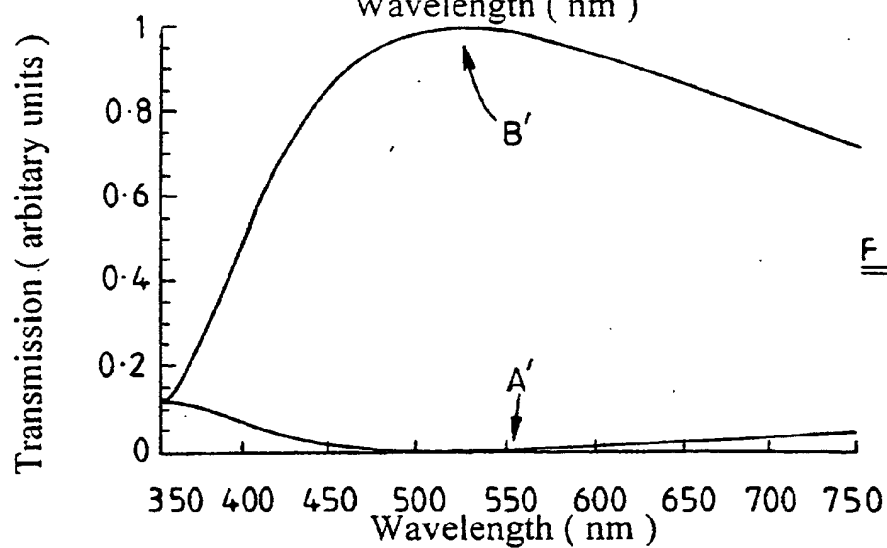
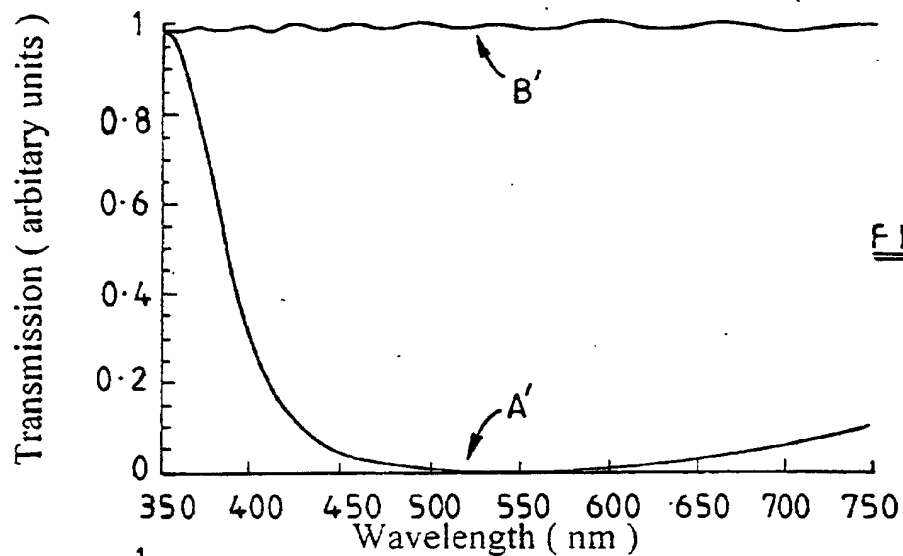


FIG 5







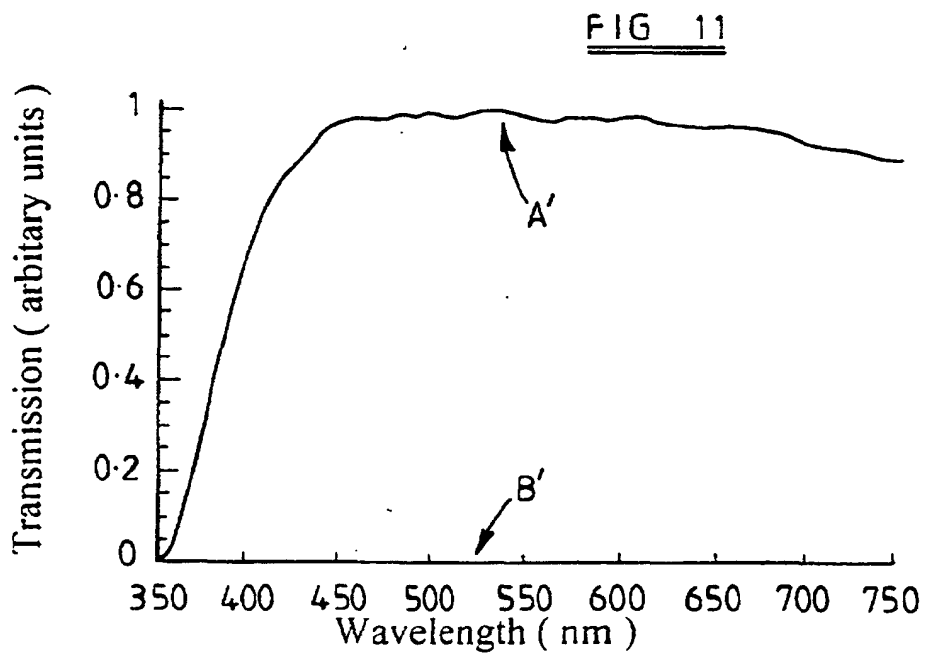
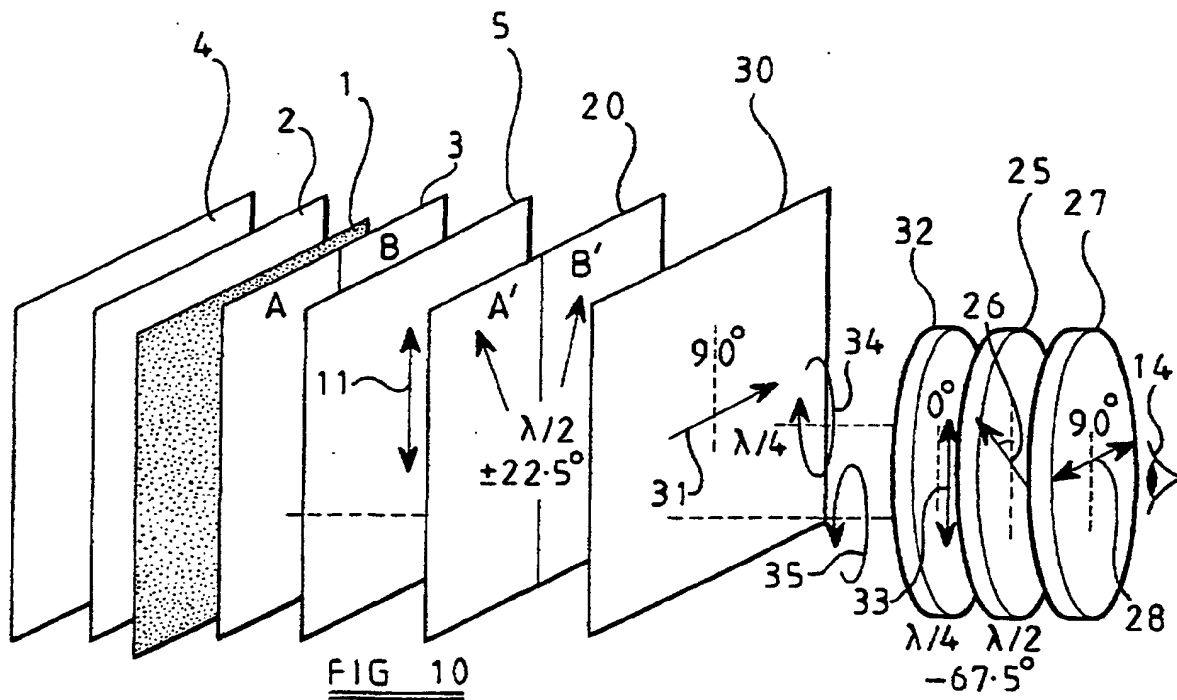
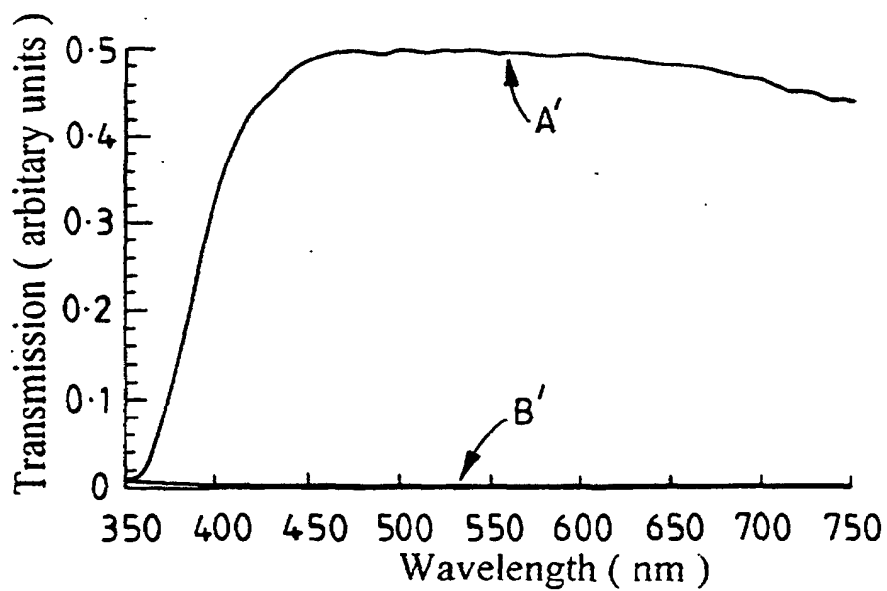
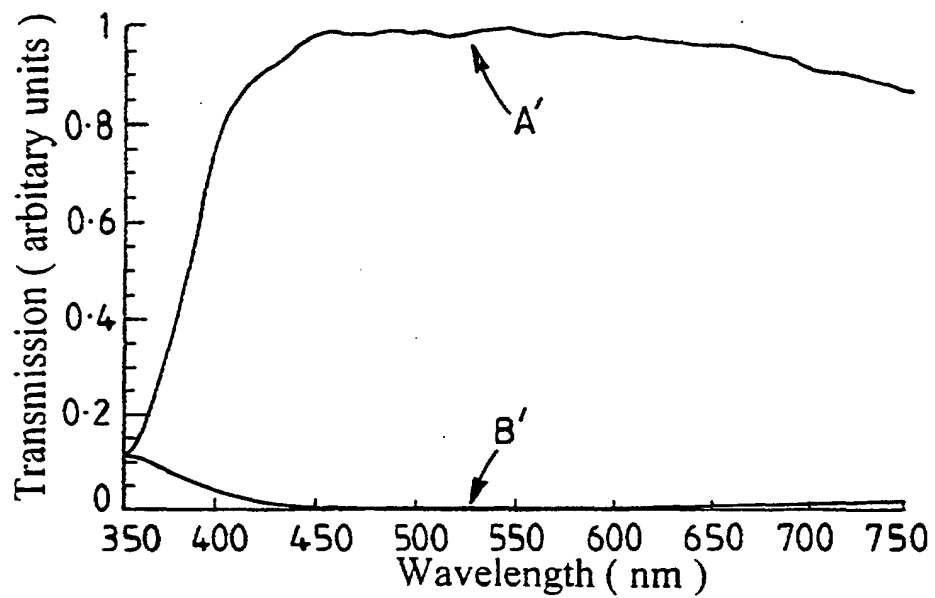
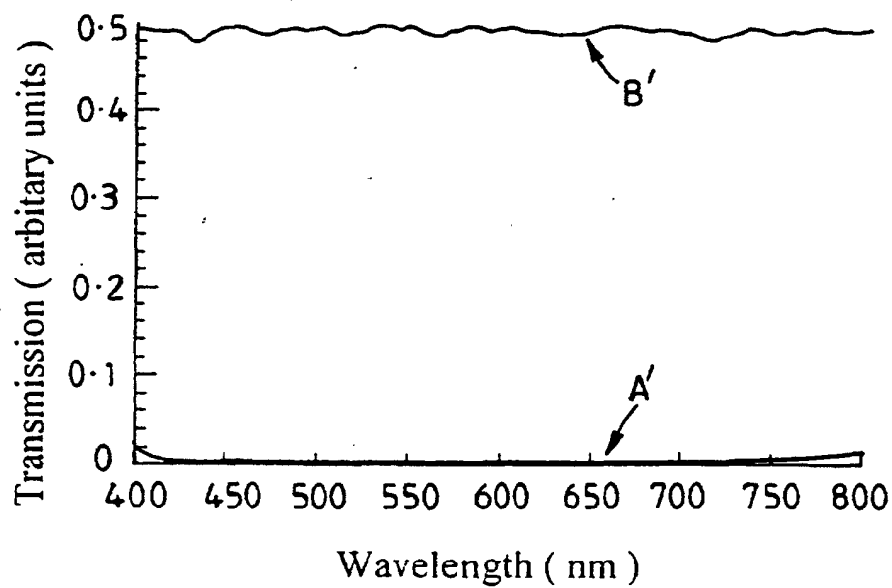
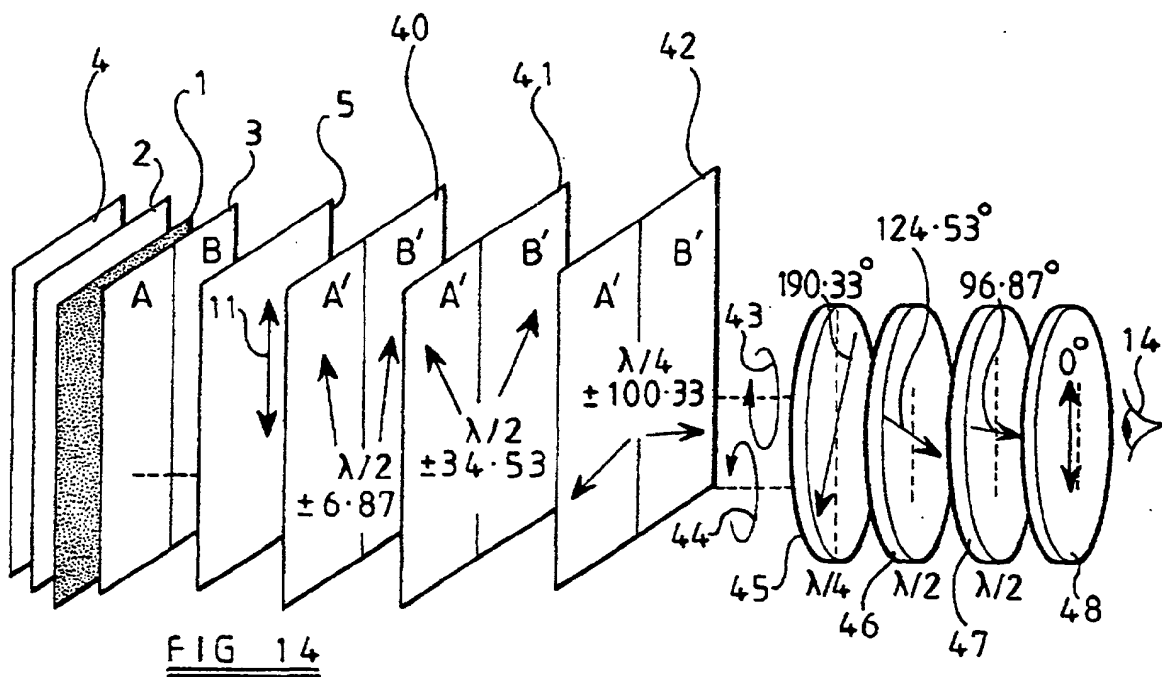
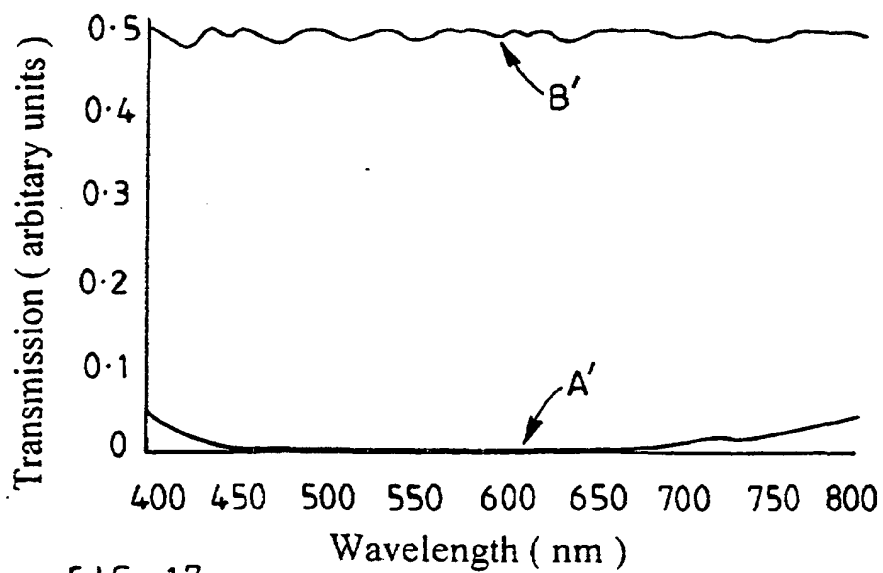
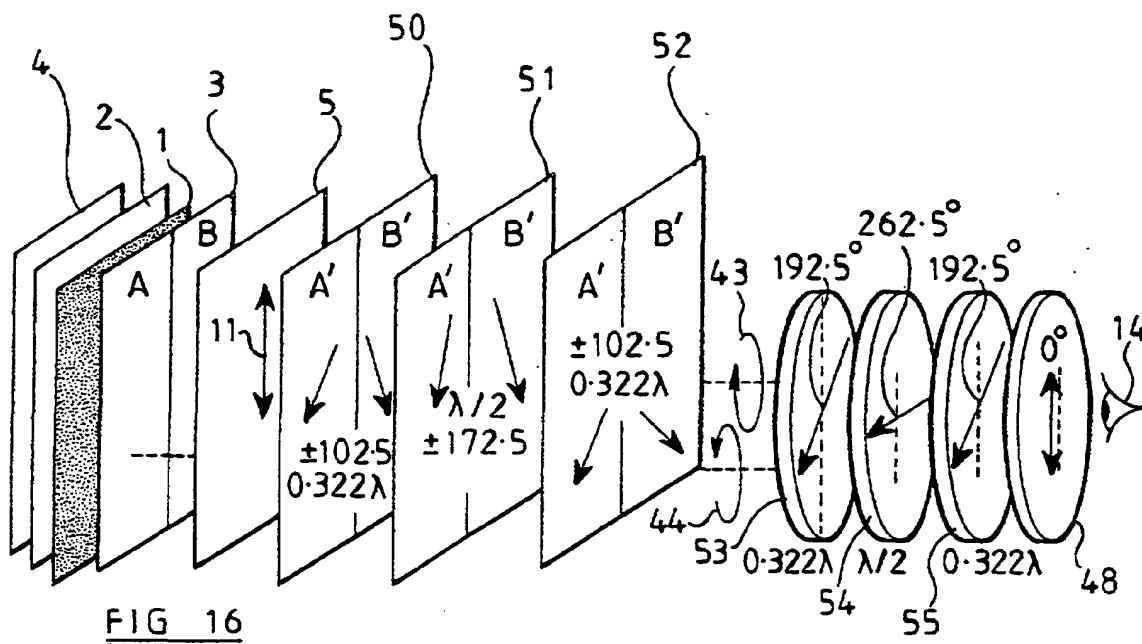


FIG 12FIG 13





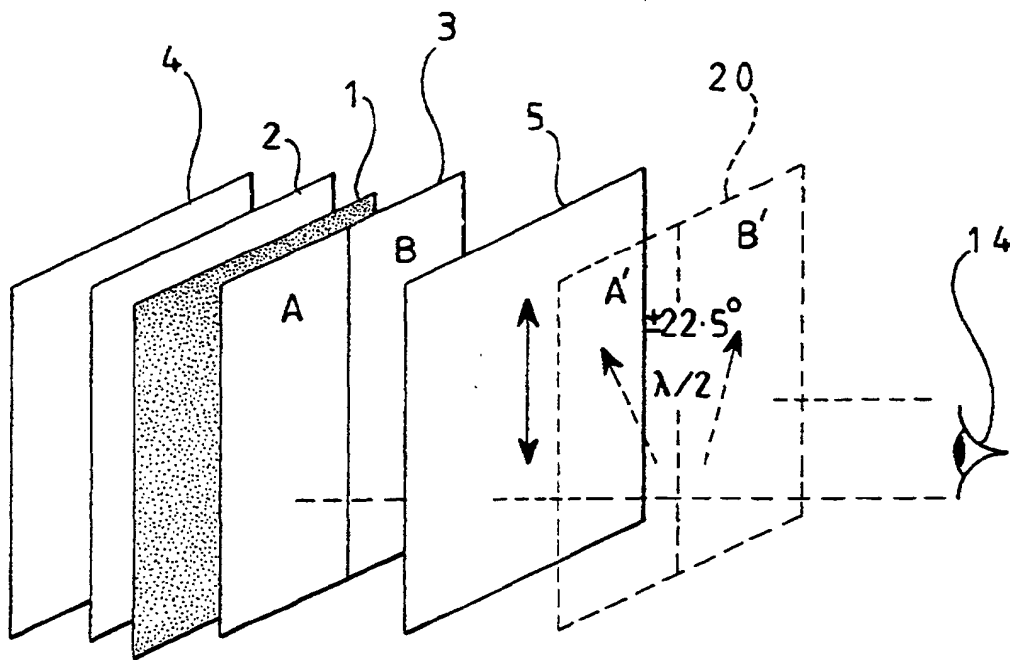


FIG 18